

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-10 SAM-01 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /078 W

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P R 291647Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3914

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY DAKARA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5785

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO SP SS

SUBJECT: SKIRMISH REPORTED IN SPANISH SAHARA

REF: FBIS L282240 NOV 74

1. NOV 29 SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS, CITING UPI, REPORTS A RECENT CLASH BETWEEN SPANISH TROOPS AND "SAHARAN RESISTANTS". REPORT STATES ONE SPANISH SOLDIER AND ONE SAHARAN GUIDE (PRESUMABLY OF SPANISH-LED FORCES) WOUNDED DURING FRAY. NO INDICATION WHETHER CONTACT TOOK PLACE IN SAHARA OR GOM TERRITORY.

2. WE ALSO NOTE REFERENCED FBIS ITEM QUOTING RADIO MADRID REPORT THAT BRIEF ENCOUNTER TOOK PLACE NEAR MATALA IN SPANISH SAHARA. ACCORDING THIS REPORT, SHOTS EXCHANGED WHEN SPANISH-LED SAHARA NOMAD TROOPS MET SMALL BAND OF ARMED REBEL SAHARANS "FLEETING FROM MOROCCO". REPORT
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ADDS ONE SPANISH SOLDIER WOUNDED.

3. MOROCCAN PRESS ALSO CARRIES REPORT THAT SPANISH AUTHORITIES HAVE ARRESTED 60 WOMEN AFTER "SAVAGELY" PUTTING DOWN A DEMONSTRATION STAGED BY HUNDREDS OF WOMEN BEFORE JEMAA IN EL-AYOUN DURING WHICH THEY SAID TO HAVE CHANGED PRO-MOROCCAN SLOGANS. ISTIQLAL DAILY "L'OPINION" INDICATED THAT DEMONSTRATION CAME AS RESULT OF RECENT TRIP TO TARFAYA PROVINCE BY MOROCCAN PRINCESS LALLA MALIKA.

4. SPANISH EMBASSY SOURCE SAYS THAT "OFFICIAL" VERSION OF SHOOTING INCIDENT BEING PUT OUT BY GOS IS SAME AS THAT CARRIED ON MADRID RADIO. SOURCE SPECULATED THAT PERSONS FLEETING FROM MOROCCO MAY IN FACT HAVE BEEN SAHARA LIBERATION FRONT GUERRILLAS WHO FOR SOME REASON HAD FOUND IT CONVENIENT TO GO TO MOROCCO IN COURSE OF THEIR OPERATIONS. WITH RESPECT TO DEMONSTRATIONS AT EL-AYOUN, SOURCE SAID THAT WOMEN WERE MEMBERS OF FAMILY OF SAHARAN ARRESTED EARLIER FOR SABOTAGE BOU CRAA PHOSPHATE CONVEYOR BELT. SOURCE RIDICULED MOROCCAN PRESS ASSERTION THAT WOMEN WERE DEMONSTRATING IN SUPPORT OF MOROCCON ON OCCASION OF LALLA MALIKA'S TRIP TO TARFAYA PROVINCE. SOURCE ALSO DENIED THAT DEMONSTRATIONS HAD BEEN "SAVAGELY REPRESSED".

5. COMMENT: THIS IS MOST EXPLICIT REPORT OF ARMED CLASH WE HAVE SEEN IN MOROCCAN PRESS IN RECENT MONTHS. AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, SUCH CLASHES HAVE TAKEN PLACE FROM TIME TO TIME BUT THESE INCIDENTS ARE NOT ORDINARILY REPORTED BY MOROCCAN PRESS BECAUSE GUERRILLAS USUALLY MEMBERS OF SAHARA LIBERATION FRONT, WHICH GOM OPPOSES. NOT CLEAR WHY PRESS HERE CHOSE TO PLAY UP THIS PARTICULAR INCIDENT. IT MAY BE THAT GUERRILLAS HAD GOM SUPPORT OR AT LEAST THAT FACTS OF CASE AS REPORTED FROM MADRID SUFFICIENTLY UNCLEAR TO PERMIT MOROCCAN PRESS TO CALL THOSE INVOLVED "RESISTANTS" WITHOUT FURTHER IDENTIFICATION. WHATEVER THE FACTS OF CLASH, PUBLICATION SERVES TO STRIKE NOTE OF URGENCY AT TIME SAHARA BEING DISCUSSED IN UNGA FOURTH COMMITTEE IN NEW YORK.
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